

In the drawings:

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d), please amend the application drawings by substituting the replacement sheets 1/4 through 4/4 attached hereto for the drawing sheets originally filed with the application. The replacement sheets are in compliance with § 1.84 and include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the respective drawing sheet. Furthermore, each replacement sheet is labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the header. The replacement sheets are submitted to formalize the hand-written reference numerals in response to paragraph 3 of the Office Action. Marked-up copies of the amended drawing figures are deemed unnecessary, and therefore, are not been included with this Amendment. However, Applicant will submit a marked-up copy of any amended drawing figures if required by the Examiner.

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claim 2 is amended to correct a minor deficiency. Claims 1 and 3-6 remain as previously submitted in the Substitute Specification filed on June 23, 2004. As a result, claims 1-6 are pending in the application. In addition, replacement drawing sheets 1/4 through 4/4 are submitted herewith.

Drawings

Pursuant to paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner requires new corrected drawings because the reference numbers are hand-written in such a way as to make the reference numbers difficult to read. Replacement drawing sheets 1/4 through 4/4 in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d) are attached hereto to replace the drawings sheets originally filed with the application.

Claim Objections

Pursuant to paragraph 4 of the Office Action, claim 1 [sic: Claim 2] stands objected to for the informalities stated therein. Applicant has amended claim 2 to correct the minor deficiency, as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to claim 2.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

Pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Office Action, claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,948,220 (Violo et al.). The Examiner asserts that Violo et al. teach each and every limitation of the rejected claims, and in particular, “at least two splicing cassettes arranged in a holder (22A, 22B and 22C) mounted on a withdrawable mounting device (66 and 68) ... The holder can also be pivoted from the first plane to a second

plane as shown in figure 8. As shown in the figures, the first plane (shown in figure 1) and the second plane (as shown in figure 8) are at a 90 degree angle to one another." See Office Action at page 3.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Contrary to the Examiner's assertions, Violo et al. does not *identically* disclose each and every limitation of independent claim 1. In the first place, Violo et al. fails to identically disclose a *splicing* cassette management system comprising two or more *splicing* cassettes which are arranged in a *splicing cassette holder*. Instead, Violo et al. discloses "... in the upper portion, three supports 22A, 22B and 22C for optical fiber coiling loops and fiber-to-fiber connectors, and, in the lower portion, several compartments for storage of spare loops of optical fibers ...". Column 4, at lines 23-27. Thus, Violo et al. teaches a patch box, cabinet or module for storing excess lengths and slack coils of jacketed optical fibers having fiber optic connectors mounted upon at least one end. The supports 22A, 22B and 22C are not configured for splicing pairs of optical fibers, and furthermore, are not configured for *holding* splicing cassettes. Therefore, Violo et al. does not teach a plurality of splicing cassettes arranged in a splicing cassette holder.

Secondly, the supports 22A, 22B and 22C are not mounted on a withdrawable mounting device, moved together with the mounting device on a first plane, and pivoted from the first plane to a second plane. Instead, the supports are mounted on the withdrawable slides 66 by means of a rule 68 at an upper end of a rod 7 that is rotationally mounted between the slides 66. Thus, the supports 22A, 22B and 22C move with the rod 7 and slides 66 in a first plane parallel to the side walls 64 and 65 as indicated by the arrow T in FIG. 3. Next, the supports are rotated approximately 90 degrees about the rod 7 as indicated by the arrow R in FIG. 5 until they extend parallel to the guides 66 and the side walls 64 and 65, as best shown in FIG. 7. Finally, each support rotates individually about the pivot axis A *in the first plane* to the position of support 22B shown in FIG. 8 and indicated by arrow P. See column 6, line 62 through column 7, line 68. Thus, the supports 22A, 22B and 22C (which are not splicing cassette holders) are not pivoted from the first plane to a second plane, as required in claim 1.

Independent base claim 1 is patentable for at least the foregoing reasons. Claims 2-5 depend directly or indirectly from patentable base claim 1, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Pursuant to paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Office Action, claim 6 stands rejected as being unpatentable (i.e., obvious) over Violo et al. as applied to claims 1-5 above, and further in view of United States Patent No. 5,335,349 to Kutsch et al. The Examiner asserts that Violo et al. does not explicitly teach the pivoting device is in the form of a latching joint, but that Kutsch et al. teach the use of pivoting latching joints. Thus, the Examiner concludes, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a pivoting latching joint as taught by Kutsch et al. in the splicing cassette management system as taught by Violo et al.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Claim 6 depends indirectly from patentable base claim 1, and thus is likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to the drawings and the rejections to the claims, and to reconsider the application as amended herein. This Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action and places the application in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowability for the pending claims 1-6. Applicant encourages the Examiner to contact the undersigned directly to further the prosecution of any remaining issues, and thereby expedite allowance of the application.

This Amendment does not result in more independent or total claims than paid for previously (i.e., 1 independent claim and 6 total claims). Accordingly, no fee for excess claims is believed to be due. The Examiner is hereby authorized to any fee due in connection with the filing of this response, including any excess claims fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 not already accounted for, such an extension is requested and the fee should likewise be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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